

THE FAIRFAX AREA AGENCY ON AGING PRESENTS CAREGIVER'S CORNER ONLINE NOVEMBER 2005

"Caregiver's Corner Online" is an electronic newsletter produced by the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging (AAA) with funding from the National Family Caregiver Support Program of the Older Americans Act. Our goal is to send you information to support you as a family caregiver for an older adult.

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1. FOR WINTER WARMTH AND SAFETY. With concern about the high cost of energy this winter, the following tips for warmth and safety may be useful for you to implement with your loved ones who live alone. (Provided by the Virginia Department for Aging, and Franklin Long Term Care Coordinating Committee, with editing.)

- If you have a thermostat, leave it at a level comfortable when you are warmly dressed, but not below 65 degrees. Do not change it frequently.
- Dress in layers. Be sure to keep your head and feet covered when especially cold.
- Close off rooms that you do not use often. Be sure that rooms with plumbing have enough heat to avoid freezing pipes.
- Check furnaces, stoves, and flues each year for safety and the best heating efficiency.
- If you do not have storm windows, put plastic sheeting over windows to reduce heat loss. Put adhesive foam rubber strips around doors and windows to help stop air leaks.
- Be aware that opening and closing doors allows precious heat to escape.

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- Consider using a ceiling fan to circulate air, especially if you have high ceilings. Warm air rises.
- Fill cracks around windows, doors, vents, chimneys, pipes, and wires.
- Water pipes can be covered with insulation to prevent freezing. Contact with rocks or cement can cause pipes to freeze more quickly.
- Check for adequate insulation, especially in attic areas where most heat is lost.
- Cook warm meals in winter. The extra heat from cooking will help warm your home. But do not try to heat a room with your oven except in an extreme emergency. It is inefficient and dangerous.
- Avoid space heaters, except in an emergency. They tend to be dangerous and inefficient. Never use outdoor grills or stoves for indoor heat. Carbon monoxide poisoning can result in death.
- Eat healthy foods and drink plenty of liquids. Inadequate nutrition can make you feel colder. Avoid alcohol.
- Be active. Moving around moderately stimulates circulation, but overexertion in cold weather can be dangerous.
- Beware of ice and other slip hazards when you must go outdoors. For your hands, mittens are warmer than gloves.
- Don't freeze! If you have done all you can but still can't stay safely warm, please contact Fairfax County Coordinated Services Planning at 703-222-0880, to explore utility assistance options in your community.
- If your body temperature falls below 96 degrees, get medical help immediately.

2. A CAREGIVER SHARES HER THOUGHTS. Evelyn Carroll, a local resident, shares some thoughts on being a caregiver for her parents:

"Becoming a caregiver is a very big responsibility. You have to learn to give all the help you can without taking away any independence from the people you are caring for. Letting the people you love continue to care for themselves, but helping when they are not looking is not an easy task. Anyone undertaking these responsibilities must be prepared to give and take, and to learn when to do both. My parents are very independent and responsible adults. They have been married for almost 60 years and are used to doing things their way. As a caregiver, my husband and I are learning how to help, but also to let them lead. Letting them lead is a very important part of their lives and we do not want them to think or even feel that they are worthless. They both have a lot of living to do and their lives are very important to them and to the whole family."

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November is dedicated to honoring and supporting Caregivers of Older Adults. We salute Evelyn and all who give so much of themselves to care for loved ones, not only in November but every day of the year.

If you have a story or perspective to share, please send it to the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/aaa and click on "Caregiver Questions."

3. NOVEMBER 21 IS DEADLINE TO SIGN UP TO ATTEND THE SPECIAL DAY FOR CAREGIVERS OF OLDER ADULTS. The third annual event for caregivers of older adults, "Give Care, Take Care," will be held on Tuesday, November 29, from 9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Springfield Golf and Country Club, 8301 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield. Mary Fridley, RN, BSN, will speak on coping skills for caregivers, "When Life Throws You a Curve Ball." A buffet lunch will be served. The cost is \$10. Scholarships are available. To sign up by the deadline, November 21, please call 703-324-5425, TTY 703-449-1186. Details are available online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/aaa. The program is sponsored by the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging with funding from the National Family Caregiver Support Program. For reasonable ADA accommodations only, please contact Betsy Pugin at 703-324-5401, TTY 703-449-1186.

4. PREVIOUS EDITIONS OF "CAREGIVER'S CORNER ONLINE" NEWSLETTER ARE NOW AVAILABLE. Current and past editions of the "Caregiver's Corner Online" newsletter are available online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/aaa/caregivers_corner_nl.htm.

Please note that these items are included for informational purposes only and do not imply endorsement by the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging or Fairfax County Government.

For further information, please contact an Aging Information Specialist at the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging (telephone: 703-324-7948; TTY 703-449-1186 or e-mail: fairfax_aaa@fairfaxcounty.gov). Visit our website at: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/aaa.
